

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

*Department: Town Administration
October 2010*

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Town Administration

I. Introduction

The Town Administration function of the Town has specific organizational and budget responsibility for the General Government Executive, Assessing, Legal Expenses, Personnel Administration/Insurance, Property/Liability Insurance, Health Administration, Health Agencies and Hospitals, and Welfare budgets. In addition, the office has supervisory responsibility for all other Town departments, employees and budgets except the Library. The Department coordinates the activities of the Board of Selectmen and is responsible for the formation and timely completion of the annual town budget within the parameters established by the Board. The Department consists of the Town Administrator and the Executive Assistant. The current staffing is adequate to perform the essential tasks required. The additional responsibilities of the Executive Assistant (welfare officer, de facto purchasing agent, human resource matters, finance issues, and multitude of everyday requests) does put a burden on the limited staffing available in this department. As was mentioned in the Finance Department Review, staffing issues that restrict both departments will eventually need to be collaboratively addressed, perhaps with additional hours in a part time position.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

The goal for Town Administration is to manage the costs associated with delivering local government service to the taxpayers in a way that has the least impact on those taxpayers. In addition to the typical challenges of trying to provide a high level of service with minimal staff, we are always trying to determine the level and types of service that the majority of the taxpayers want and expect from their local government. Another challenge over the last few years in managing the cost of local government has been the actions of state government in passing on additional costs to local municipalities, as well as reducing existing local funding. To keep local taxes from increasing will require even greater ingenuity, and will likely lead to a discussion regarding the advisability of decreasing the level of local services.

Administration will continue to focus on efforts to reduce current and future expenses in our insurances, including risk management and health. As the nation continues to debate health insurance, at the local level we wrestle with managing skyrocketing premiums. We have attempted to be creative in altering plans to reduce costs but those changes ultimately create additional costs for employees who are seeing their compensation eroded by these costs with no increase in pay.

Related to this overall issue, the Town is currently in a pay and classification study for all of our employees. It is anticipated that this study will be completed in late fall of this year, and will provide a needed tool to determine equitable wages and benefits, both internally within the Town, and also externally when compared to comparable communities.

In our continuing efforts to provide an enhanced source of communication with our citizens, we have embarked on a plan to dramatically improve the town web site within our existing budget. The plan involves utilizing our existing IT vendor who is willing to take on this challenge under their existing contract. To truly get the most out of the site will require additional work from all of our departments who will be responsible for maintaining the various pages with current information in the new content management system.

We continue in our efforts to encourage teamwork, collaboration, and empowerment within the town's managerial workforce to increase efficiencies. Without a doubt, the quality of the management staff within the town departments is the primary reason that the town has been able to deliver a high level of service to its citizens with dramatically less staff than nearly all comparable communities.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The Department will continue our efforts to create savings in whatever lines that we can control so that we will be able to absorb those cost increases that are out of our control. A simple example of this is the statutory requirement to conduct a statistical revaluation in the next fiscal year, an item that is currently about \$60,000 under funded because the voters have not chosen to fund the capital reserve fund for the past two years. We will increase efforts to monitor our staffing needs in all departments and seek opportunities to utilize personnel in a "cross over" mode between departments whenever possible to enhance our efficiencies. Realizing the large cost of personnel costs in any budget, our goal will be to continue to rank very low on staffing levels when compared to other municipalities. Should the economy improve and growth return to our region, continuing to effectively and efficiently operate with existing staffing levels will become more difficult.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

Just as it is for the taxpayer, the economy continues to be the dominant driver in the ability to address the town's future needs. We will continue to monitor infrastructure and significant capital item needs as best as possible. Our Capital Improvements Plan, which was a significant body of work a few years ago, has largely been ignored as funding did not exist to address our needs. In the very near future it will become critical to prioritize some of the items that have been deferred before we find ourselves in a position very similar to our roads, where the only solution will be catch up by seeking large sums or bonds. In a very similar vein, we must not lose sight of the importance of the town employees and the need to compensate them equitably for the work they do. As mentioned above the study currently underway will provide us the tool to know where we stand, but it will do nothing to solve any problems that are identified. To defer these issues is very easy in a poor economy, but it may not be in the best long term interests of the Town.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary D. MacGuire
Town Administrator

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Town Clerk
September 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Town Clerk

The Clerk's office is responsible for motor vehicle registrations, dog licenses, voter registration, election preparation including absentee ballots, vital record management including preparation of marriage licenses, birth and death certificates. Currently we can produce records of events taking place in the State of NH from January of 1988 to the present. We collect parking and dog fines.

Currently my office is staffed by myself, fulltime, and Lavern Fucci, part-time. We handle approximately 15000 vehicle registrations per year. We process new registrations, renewals and transfers and complete about 95% of the transactions here as municipal agents for the State. It is apparent that the state has given the town clerks the majority of the work which is a good thing for the state since they can reduce their work force thus reducing their costs but have given more work to the cities and towns whose only benefit is the agent fee collected with each registration. Some towns have needed to add more hours or additional employees in their budgets as the workload has increased for their department. I don't see that is necessary this year in my office but may consider asking for a full time deputy in the future. As stated above, the Town Clerk handles much more than vehicle registrations.

We are talking to our internet provider about credit card use which has been successful in other towns. We license dogs on line now.

We have three elections in this fiscal year, that being the Town election in March, the September Primary and the November General Election. Therefore, costs are up from last year. Programming and printing of the ballots are the major expense.

We, in the Town Clerk's office, will continue to improve the services offered to our customers as they become available. Thanks for your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A Demers

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Finance
Date: Fall 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Finance

I. Introduction

The Finance Department is responsible for the monetary record keeping on behalf of the town. This not only includes the everyday expending of funds and recording of revenues but also the payroll process, state reporting requirements, and process and procedures required by the GASB (Government Accounting Standards Board). GASB is responsible for setting generally accepted accounting principals for state and local governments.

The department is staffed by a full time finance director and a 20 hour per week part time assistant. The Finance Department also taps into the resources of the administration department by using the executive assistant for data entry of revenues into the accounting system. The team approach with administration works well and keeps things running smoothly.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

As in the past as well as in the future, the ultimate goal of the Finance Department is to provide the most up to date and accurate information on demand.

The change in the economy over the past few years has presented its share of challenges. The finance office continues to work closely with the treasurer on researching banking institutions for the best interest rates. The past year the town established multiple certificates of deposits with staggering due dates at interest rates of over 1%. These rates may not appear very attractive, but are considerably higher than the 0.2-0.5% earned on the town's general fund account.

The finance office will continue to work closely with the town treasurer to ensure that the taxpayer funds are kept secure and fully protected while earning a competitive interest rate.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The short-term goal of the department is to review the current procedures. This includes procedures within the department as well as with the other departments to see if there is a more efficient way to process data and requests without sacrificing internal controls.

The long-term goal of the department has not changed from the previous year. Ideally, in the future, it would be to the benefit of the town to develop the duties and responsibilities of a human resource person. With each passing year, more and more time is being spent on human resource issues such as FMLA, worker

compensation, disability, and benefit administration; researching and documenting each case or question to make sure that the proper procedures are followed. The area of human resources is very complex. There is a need for the Town to have a certified human resource person on staff to ensure that the Town is in compliance with both federal and state labor laws as well as have an in-depth understanding of all the benefits offered. Currently these duties are spread out between the town administrator, town executive assistant, and the finance director. For the more challenging situations the town relies on the expertise of the benefit providers as well as with town attorneys.

One solution would be to incorporate human resource duties into the role of the part time finance assistant by increasing hours from the current 20 per week to 30 the first year then to full-time status the following year. This would eliminate the need for creating a new position and hiring additional staff as well as provide the town with a savings in attorney fees.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

It has been ten years since the current accounting software was implemented. Over these 10 years there have been no major upgrades or enhancements to the software. The database server for the software had been upgraded once in 2009, but no upgrades to accounting software. To put this into perspective, the software was originally designed and implemented using a Windows Server 4.0 platform. The software report writer originally installed was Crystal Reports version 8 released in January 2000. Ten years later the town is still using the same accounting and report writing software and technology. The accounting software is no longer state of the art and is showing signs of conflicts with the newer operating systems. With all the advances in technology and computer programs, it would be in the best interest of the town to begin searching for newer software that would be more efficient, diversified, and interactive. Implementing new software and the conversion process is a large undertaking and time consuming process. Beginning this process now should allow ample time to thoroughly research accounting software available and find one that will best fit the needs of the Town of Amherst.

Putting aside the future needs of the Finance Department, the utmost important goal and function of the Finance Department is and will continue to be striving to maintain the most accurate, up to date information for all departments and continue to implement policies and procedures to protect the monetary assets of the town.

Respectfully Submitted,

Merri Howe
Finance Director

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Tax Collection
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Tax Collection

I. Introduction

The Amherst Tax Collector's Office is committed to the collection of the town, county and school's annual property taxes amounting in excess of thirty-seven million dollars. Collections are performed in a professional and courteous manner to offer the citizens of Amherst the highest quality of service while maintaining a cost effective process. The property tax collection process includes processing and mailing approximately 5,200 tax bills twice a year, collecting and posting the payments for these bills, delinquent notices, notification and placement of tax liens for outstanding taxes, notification to mortgage companies, establishing and monitoring payment plan agreements for delinquent accounts, tax lien redemptions, etc. The town continues to maintain an excellent rate of collection.

The Baboosic Lake Community Septic System now has four phases in operation. The tax office is responsible for the quarterly maintenance billing for each of these phases as well as the initial installation charges.

In addition to collections, the tax office is also the central depository for the Town of Amherst. This process involves receiving and verifying all funds collected by every department prior to being deposited at the bank. More than eleven hundred deposits were processed during fiscal year 2010.

Staffing in the tax office remains the same with 1 full time Tax Collector position and 1 part time deputy position whose services are shared with the assessing department.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

Offering quality service to the residents of Amherst is the number one priority of the tax office. We continue to explore alternative payment methods for our taxpayers to utilize. We have considered the use of debit/credit cards for several years, which has yet to become a reality. The fees associated with credit cards along with the cost to implement the program, have posed some challenges. Now that consumers are more likely to use debit cards and electronic checks, usage costs will be nominal and there is now a very competitive market for third party vendors that coordinate these payment options for the town which makes this a much more viable option to implement for property tax payments both online and at the counter. This would be a convenience fee funded program whereby the town would pass the costs involved in processing electronic payments on to the user. We do still have some obstacles

to overcome. As our Finance Director had mentioned, our financial software which is also used for tax collection needs to be upgraded so there may be a need to wait for the software upgrade to effectively implement this program.

New and innovative ways of processing payments and invoices are also becoming available such as check and payment scanning, and more advanced utility billing options. Once new software options become available, I would like to consider these items for implementation as well.

In the long term, we will continue to offer our residents the best level of service possible. Through education and effective communication we will continue to make every effort to meet the needs of the residents of Amherst.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The fiscal goals for the tax office are to maintain or improve the level of service being provided with little or no impact on the department's budget. Our focus will remain on user fees to fund enhanced payment options. Obviously, the user will have the option of choosing the form of payment that best fits their needs.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

With the current tax structure and the financial situation on the state level, each town faces a heavy burden to fund the town, school, and county budgets. Therefore, it is vital for the Town to offer our residents every opportunity available to assist them in the payment of their taxes. The tax office will continue to make every effort to meet these needs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail P. Stout

Tax Collector

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Planning and Zoning
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Planning and Zoning

I. Introduction

This report is basically the same as the past several years. The local economic conditions have not changed, however we are seeing several more homes being constructed and have had a few meetings with developers relative to new projects.

The Planning and Zoning Department deals with a varied numbers of subjects: All Building permits are applied through the Department and are processed by the staff and approved for NH Building Code compliance by the Building Inspector, and for Zoning compliance by the Planning Director. Building inspections are the responsibility of the Building Inspector. The Building Inspector hold office hours every Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 am to about 9 am for personal consultations with citizens and builders.

All issues dealing with septic systems, including test pit observations, plan reviews, bottom of bed inspections, and final inspections are the responsibility of the Planning Director, who, in addition, deals with all failures of septic systems. The Planning Director is also available for consultation with developers of residential and commercial properties to help with explanations and interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Regulations.

All Zoning violations and legal issues resulting from such violations are dealt with by the Planning Director, as Code Enforcement Officer, in concert with the Town Administrator and Town Counsel for Zoning violations and, if applicable, with the Amherst General Town Counsel. The Department is currently dealing with several lawsuits resulting from Zoning violations.

The Department provides support for the Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Planning Board, and the Historic District Commission. This includes preparation for public meetings and hearings, recording and producing minutes of meetings in a timely fashion, and maintaining the files for all of these boards.

In addition, through the Department's Technical Assistant, the Department provides technical assistance to the Public Works Department for Fill and Dredge Permits, from the NHDES, for culvert replacements and other projects requiring such assistance.

Currently the Department full time staff includes the Planning Director, Charlie Tiedemann, and the Technical Assistant, John St. Pierre. The part time staff includes the Building Inspector, George Couture, a part time clerk Patty Delisle (who also works part time for the Public Works Department), and a part time minute taker, Darlene Bouffard.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

The budget this year for this Department will continue to be flat since there are no projected increases except for employee steps.

Under long term goals: I would like to see the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment files more accessible to not only the Town Hall staff, but also the general public. A long term solution would be to scan the files so that they were available by computer terminal. This probably would involve the purchase of a large size scanner / plotter. I realize that the current economic conditions virtually rule this out as impossible. However, this could possibly be financed with fees for research of documents. I suggest that a standard research fee of perhaps a minimum of \$ 25 with an additional fee of up to \$ 35 for more complex tasks. The cost of the scanner would be in the \$ 3000 range, but the existing computers at the Town Hall would only need software upgrades. In addition, I would like to see the various Boards' meeting minutes preserved in some type of book form similar to what is used for minutes now located within the vault. It would also be good to get all the minutes from the Board's on the Town's web site for public viewing.

The Building Inspector is still working only two days per week due to the decrease in residential and commercial development. I believe that within a relatively short period of time he will retire. It will be very difficult to replace him, not only because he is very experienced, but also because it will be a limited position to fill because of the part time aspect. There are several avenues of discussion ongoing between the Planning Director, the Public Works Director, and the Town Administrator to plan for this eventuality.

Generally speaking, I think that the Department can move thru the next few years with about the same fiscal impact as other years. The cooperation between this Department and other Departments is exceptionally good and I want to continue to thank the Public Works Director, Bruce Berry, for his support and advice. I also want to point out that the system of inspecting new Town roads has been greatly enhanced with the requirement of the Planning Board that all of the road construction inspections are to be paid for by the developer. This has allowed the Town, through the Planning Department, to hire a professional engineering firm, with construction expertise, to oversee the roadway construction as it happens, thus freeing up the Public Works Department from time consuming inspections. All of this, as I stated above, without costing the Town any funds.

III. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

The present economic situation certainly continues to be poor. The Zoning Department continues to see a decline in residential and commercial Building Permits. Although the total number of permits seems to stay relatively stable, this calendar year I feel the total may exceed last year (first 8 months projected ahead), there continue to be more permits for generators, a few more for additions and remodeling, a steady amount electrical service upgrades, and more septic system

repairs. The permits for swimming pools have jumped dramatically from last year's total of zero.

It is my opinion that the next year will continue to be economically flat without any real upturn. I admit that the economic news is so often contradictory and that makes it very difficult to predict the future.

Respectfully Submitted:

Charlie Tiedemann

Planning Director

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Police
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Police

I. Introduction

The Amherst Police Department is a 24/7 operation providing law enforcement, crime prevention, and other police services to all citizens who live, work, visit, or travel through the Town of Amherst. In carrying out these duties, the police employees strive to pay particular attention to the mission statement, which promises in part to enrich the quality of life in the Town while following the tenets of firmness, fairness, impartiality, compassion, pride, professionalism, integrity, and respect.

Current Authorized Staffing:

Police Chief
Lieutenant (2)
Sergeant (2)
Investigator (2)
Patrol Officer (9)
School Resource Officer (2)
Executive Assistant

Part-Time Patrol Officer (3)
School Crossing Guard (2)

Total = 19 Full Time, 5 Part Time

The department is currently fully staffed with 18 full-time officers and 3 part-time officers. Most recently, two full-time officers were hired, effective August 1st, filling vacancies caused by resignations. Both officers are currently enrolled in fourteen weeks of academy training and are scheduled to graduate in December. The officers will then undergo approximately another eight to twelve weeks of field training before being ready for patrol duties.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

Several goals for the department have been set, including a re-commitment to a citizen outreach crime prevention program and the need to identify and utilize more and better in-service training for the officers. However, these goals are eclipsed by another, more urgent goal; the need for quick resolution of the outstanding union contract. By far, the most important issue currently facing the police department is the need for a collective bargaining agreement between the

town and the officers. The department employs fifteen officers that belong to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) bargaining unit. These employees have been working without a contract since July 1, 2009, despite repeated efforts to reach accord. While there are plenty of reasons and explanations for the impasse, I am hopeful that we can move beyond the previous setbacks and focus on the need to find accord without further delay. Although the officers have proven themselves to be professionals, willing and capable of continuing to perform at high levels throughout the ordeal, the department's operation has already been affected and continued delay will result in further harm to the department's operation. In the same way that it is anticipated the wage and benefit study will provide insight and direction regarding compensation for the town's other personnel, I am hopeful that it will also be a key component in finding a resolution to this impasse.

Last year the department lost two officers to nearby communities who sought out increased wages and opportunities elsewhere. At the cost of about \$25,000 for each new officer, it is my priority to eliminate this cause of unnecessary turn over.

Directly related to this issue is of course the need to recognize the work that all our town employees have performed over the last two years while receiving a 1% cost of living adjustment, and concurrent reduction in health care benefits, over the same time period.. It is now a must that we find ways to compensate these valued resources before losing ground that will be very costly to make up.

Secondary to this goal are plans to re-vitalize our crime prevention program, and to partake in even greater training opportunities. The re-newed crime prevention program will focus on working with residents and business owners to provide information, strategies and programs aimed at assisting citizens in the prevention of crimes such as burglary, fraud, and crimes against the elderly. This is an area which has waned in recent years as personnel have necessarily been focused on responding to and reacting to calls for service. Lastly, although the department has always sought to take advantage of training opportunities for employees, a new commitment to identifying fresh resources for in-service training will provide greater benefit. Many of the classes offered by the state PSTC and other outlets have been exhausted, necessitating the need to find and take advantage of new resources. The law enforcement profession is undergoing significant change, reflective of the technology age, and it is important that we keep up with cutting edge approaches to investigations which are more and more technology and internet based.

In the meantime, previously set goals of starting a canine program and adding a new officer will be set aside for another year. The fiscal constraints of the current economy and the need to resolve the outstanding contract issue lead to this inescapable conclusion. Both the canine program and a new officer position are costly, and after reviewing the needs basis for each, it becomes clear that the focus should be to allocate all the available resources to compensation for the existing personnel.

Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

Of the three goals described above, only the collective bargaining agreement will have a fiscal impact. Obviously, until an agreement is reached, it is impossible to measure or predict the cost. Any costs, however, will be the subject of a separate warrant article, as required by law. In subsequent years the costs will become a part of the police budget.

Conversely, the cost of testing, hiring and training a new officer exceeds \$25,000. This cost includes candidate testing, medical examination, psychological examination, polygraph test, uniforms & equipment, police academy and field training.

III. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

Planning into the future further than the coming fiscal year is becoming a more and more difficult process. Given the uncertainty of our economic future, and the use of growth models which have been relied upon in the past but are becoming increasingly less reliable, planning five to ten years out is becoming more of a challenge. The policing profession continues to be in a state of change, with demands for services not seen previously, and increasing crime patterns not necessarily associated with a geographical location, but carried out over the internet instead.

Keeping this in mind, three things loom in the future of the police department; adding personnel to the department, space needs for the station, and a canine officer program. None of these three are surprises – all have been previously discussed. The annual cost of every new police officer will be pushing \$70,000, and the startup cost of a canine program about \$25,000, with reoccurring costs of approximately \$10,000 annually

The department is operating in a building that was first built in 1980 and later renovated and added to in 1996. The current building is approximately 10,000 square feet, approximately 5,900 of which is utilized by the police department, the rest by the EMS Department. At the time of the remodel in 1996, the building provided almost 400 square feet of space per employee. Today, the increased number of employees has reduced that square footage to 245 square feet of space per employee. More importantly, we will need to address space to enlarge the locker room, to provide a finished training area, and eventually, increased office area.

Respectfully Submitted:

Peter A. Lyon
Chief of Police
Amherst Police Department

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: EMS
September 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: EMS

I. Introduction

*The Amherst Department of Emergency Medical Services mission is to provide the highest quality, cost effective Basic and Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Services, for the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon. **Amherst EMS is consistently viewed as a leader in providing municipal cost efficient and quality patient care.** In addition to emergency medical transportation, this past year the Amherst EMS provided a variety of in-house Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support EMS continuing education programs at no cost to our employees in addition to numerous specialty programs and regional EMS conference offerings.*

Amherst EMS is currently made up of approximately 10 EMT's, 11 EMT-Intermediates, 10 Paramedics and 2 Student Interns.

During the fiscal year 2009-2010, Amherst EMS responded to the needs of approximately 535 patients.

Amherst EMS cares for our community 24/7 by providing 100% Paramedic Level coverage on our first out ambulance. Each Amherst EMS per-diem employee make a major commitment to our community, spending on average, approximately 48-72 hours a month on call and ready to respond to any emergency. Amherst EMS crew members undergo regular training in all aspects of emergency medical treatment and are required to complete continuing education courses in order to meet annual state and national EMS licensing requirements.

The current budget goal for fiscal year 2011-2012 will include anticipated line item changes for employee wages in the form of a BOS supported wage adjustment (to be determined) and approximately \$3,100.00 in line item increases for cardiac resuscitation equipment annual maintenance contract and oxygen supply costs. The current rate of pay for EMT's is \$9.25 per hour, for EMT-Intermediates is \$10.00 & \$13.92 per hour for Paramedics.

Based on the results of the current 2010 wage/salary study underway, a discussion may be necessary to consider moving forward instead with a Warrant Article for a one time EMS wage adjustment similar to the one approved by the voters in 2004, if no current wage study adjustment decision is reached prior to the close of the budget process.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

The decision by the BOS last year not to include EMS members in the percentage group of town employees that received a 2% step increase, has resulted in a significant morale and creditability issue between the EMS employees and the BOS at present due to the continued increase in a competitive wage gap between Amherst EMS and other similar communities. It is my belief that a return to a continued implementation of a BOS determined wage increase for our members in the form of a competitive wage adjustment, will continue to benefit the communities and industries serviced by Amherst EMS by providing a competitive recruitment incentive to attract high quality and experienced patient care providers. In addition to educational offerings, our enhanced recruitment and retention strategy which provides a stipend compensation for some of our members during weeknight & weekend coverage assignments, helps offset personal vehicle utilization costs and compensates members for their time away from home.

In light of the fact that our members consistently deal with bloodborne pathogen diseases and containments, as well as running the risk of personal injury or harm, a competitive compensation adjustment not only rewards our local heroes, sends a strong signal that we appreciate their unparalleled service commitment, it creates "true town employee status" thereby benefiting the management of the department through the consistent enforcement of Town Policies & Procedures by all.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The recommendation to return to a competitive wage adjustment and/or placement on a town wage grade/step classification scale and the proposed line item changes would result in an overall higher net budget increase than in previous years (amount to be determined). However, please keep in mind that the overall end result, after collected ambulance billing service revenues, proposed wage changes and cost containments for this proposed budget, is a high quality cost-efficient Paramedic level ambulance service that needs the complete support of the BOS.

Please note that my budget projections are based on approximately 725 EMS calls per year. Any increase in call activity will result in an over expenditure of part-time wages, fuel, supplies, etc. However, all overexpenditures would be off-set by increased call volume collected revenues.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

In light of our ever changing EMS response activity, as EMS Director and Health Officer, I continue to implement an "Experienced Based EMS Preparedness/Planning/Budget" approach to cost containments to ensure that we are providing the most comprehensive paramedic level service that our residents have come to expect.

One of our two 10 year old ambulances will be replaced in 2010/2011 in accordance with the town's capital equipment replacement program schedule. In past years, both ambulances were replaced every 8 years however when we changed from gas to diesel powered vehicles in 2001, I changed the scheduled replacement date to 10 years. This allowed us to maintain the current capital reserve contribution amounts and still meet our vehicle replacement goals. Lastly, rather than purchase two ambulances at the same time as in years past, a decision was made last year to replace one ambulance this current fiscal year, field test it for a year or two and then purchase the 2nd ambulance in a later years fiscal budget. This will allow us to minimize any tax impact on the voters due to continued price increases in steel while still maintaining compliance with state, federal and the American Ambulance Association Guidelines.

It continues to be my firm belief that the Town of Amherst needs to reevaluate all departments, and look for ways in which we can continue to spread our fixed cost over a larger base. One such area that still needs continued advancement and BOS support is the integration of EMS and Fire personnel as dual certified resources for the town.

During the last 10 years, volunteer Fire Departments across the nation continue to see a dramatic decrease in daytime staffing; a decrease in call volume due to improvements in fire prevention, stricter building codes and overall consumer safety. As a result, many departments continue to integrate FIRE/EMS under one roof, just in order to maintain staffing, call volume levels, training and funding.

In light of this continued trend, I feel it is important to continue to cross training members of both departments with the ultimate goal of increasing staff resources. As we have discussed with the understanding that change is difficult for most organizations, I do however feel that there is not an immediate need to rush into the consolidation of both departments under one command, housing and budget structure at this time given the historical staffing make up of both current departments and the current state of operation.

*Therefore, it is my belief that in order for EMS to continue as a department with a minimal **financial impact** on the taxpayers, until such time as either space needs for the police department, a drastic reduction in EMS and/or Fire staffing posing an immediate life safety and/or a significant cost savings can be proven, EMS needs to continue at this time as a separate public safety entity, both in command and revenue structure, until such time as it is no longer cost efficient to do so.*

Respectfully Submitted:

Brian M. Gleason

Brian M. Gleason, Director

Amherst EMS

September 23, 2010

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Fire
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Fire

I. Introduction

As the newly appointed Fire Chief from an outside organization I have the unique opportunity to view the town and department from a different perspective. My knowledge and experience may be quite different from former Chiefs, but the mission of the fire service remains the same.

Overall I must say I am very impressed with the department and its members. Generally speaking the equipment is in good shape, facilities are adequate and the membership is comprised of very dedicated and talented people.

As you can imagine and may have heard we are in the mist of changes and getting settled. Anytime there is a change in leadership there is some anxiety, excitement and enthusiasm. The department is currently in the process of promoting personnel to fill vacant officer positions and applications for new members are rolling in. We will have four applications for your approval very soon and another seven who have shown interest in joining that have taken applications home to fill out. Additionally, goal setting and strategic planning sessions have begun with the purpose of identifying the future wants and needs of the department and developing a plan to get us there. We are in the beginning stages of this process and the items I will bring to you during this budget process represent items that are of immediate concern and projects that have been on the back burner for quite some time.

The demographics of the department remain similar to last year. We are currently staffed with 33 personnel, four engines, one ladder tower, one tanker, two forestry trucks and a boat. Calls for calendar year 2009 totaled 653, as of October 1st of this year AFD has responded to 502 calls putting us on track for a 2% increase in services this year.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

As with any organization there are basic items that need to be maintained in order to provide adequate levels of service and often times service can be improved by replacing or up-grading these items. From a budgetary standpoint there are four areas that are essential for the efficient and safe operation of the fire department.

Maintenance

My first concern is the area of maintenance of protective clothing. As presented to you in last year's budget by Chief Todd, the fire department's protective clothing is quickly reaching the end of its life span. The vast majority of the clothing was

purchased with a grant in 2003 and has an expected life span of five to eight years. By National Fire Protection Standards it is no longer serviceable after ten years.

One set of firefighter turn-out pants and coat currently cost \$2,000. The current budget for purchase and replacement is \$4,500. This is sufficient money to repair and clean current gear and also adequate for replacing gloves, hoods and helmets. However it is insufficient for routine replacement of turn out pants and coats. This year's goal will be to increase this line item to facilitate partial replacement each year to maintain the inventory and avoid requesting full replacement next year.

My second concern is our breathing apparatus (SCBA). This is a similar issue to the protective clothing however, there is no line item for breathing apparatus. The purchase, service, and repair of SCBA's have come from the tools and equipment line which contains \$19,000. While this amount is sufficient for maintenance and replacement of tools and equipment it leaves very little for routine replacement of SCBA's. This year's goal will be to create and fund a line item for routine replacement and avoid the cost of full replacement next year.

The third concern is for pagers and radios. In 2013 as part of the federal interoperability plan, all pagers and radios will be required to be narrow band compatible. The majority of Amherst Fire Department pagers are greater than five years old and do not meet this requirement. Also very important to mention, this is the only means of notifying our personnel when there is an emergency call. Again there is no line item for radios and pagers, they have been purchased, maintained and repaired out of the same tools and equipment budget mentioned above. The goal for this year will be to create and fund a line item for routine replacement and avoid full replacement cost.

My final concern in this area is replacement of Engine Two, a 1987 Pierce Pumper. This need was presented to you last year by Chief Todd. The estimated replacement cost for a similar truck was presented as \$575,000. The 2011 budget included \$150,000 in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). I would like to move forward with replacing this engine. An AFD committee is being assembled to build specifications for this vehicle and request pricing. It is likely that I will be recommending a lease purchase in this budget process.

Improvements

First, to significantly improve Fire Department efficiency with regards to incident reporting, permitting, mapping and future mobile applications the department needs to transition to IMC operating software. This is the same software the Communication Center and the Police Department are using. Purchase of this software would enable Fire and EMS to share information with Police and the Communications Center. With this operating software in place the department can then move towards mobile computers in the apparatus, providing maps of incident locations and vital response information. This will also facilitate permitting and gathering of critical information in the field.

Second, the completion of the Central Station second floor. As you may know a second floor was constructed as part of the original plan but was not finished. Now 22 years later completion of this project has plagued three Fire Chief's. Completion of the second floor would provide the much needed shower facilities, storage facilities and sleeping quarters. Although we are not staffed 24/7 the showers are needed to wash off contamination before going home after a fire or hazardous materials incident. The additional storage is needed for supplies and records. Lastly the sleeping quarters are needed for multiple day events such as flooding, snow storms or ice storms when 24 hour coverage is warranted due to high call volume and delays firefighters encounter responding to the station during these events.

Lastly a concept that we are considering at this time is removing the rescue equipment from the fire engines and placing this equipment on a medium to heavy duty rescue truck. Amherst Fire and EMS respond to nearly one hundred motor vehicle accidents annually and a variety of other rescue type incidents. This concept could potentially reduce the cost of replacing the 1987 engine by specifying a straight fire engine rather than a rescue/pumper. In the short term the ambulance that EMS is trading could be used as a light duty rescue if we can commit to a three to five year plan to increase the fleet with the purchase of a medium/heavy rescue. Grant opportunities also need to be explored as a possible funding source or to reduce cost.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The goal in this area is to build on the foundation we have, be fiscally responsible and establish a budget that will maintain the department's equipment and current level of service. Although we will continue to pursue grant opportunities we must be responsible and budget for the basic necessities.

Immediate - Adequate budget for routine replacement of essential items.

- Turn out gear \$2,000 each times 8 sets for a total of \$16,000
- Pagers \$400 each times 8 for a total of \$3,600
- Radios \$1500 each times 3 for a total of \$4,500
- Self Contained Breathing apparatus \$4,000 each times 8 for a total of \$32,000
- Replace 1987 Engine (Lease Purchase)

Short Term Improvements

- IMC Operating software = \$19,000
- Mobile Computers = \$10,000
- Complete 2nd floor of Central Station = TBD

Long Term

- In the process of 1, 3, 5 year goals
- Mission Statement
- Strategic Planning
- Staffing and integration study
- Compensation for meetings, training and non-emergency services.

IV.Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

As previously stated we are in the process of identifying future needs and goals to develop a strategic plan. Although we are early in the process it is safe to say preserving the pride-spirit-tradition of Amherst Fire Department will be a top priority. The department continues to operate as predominantly paid-on-call department and, as you know it is not staffed 24/7. This is rare for a community the size of Amherst. To preserve and continue operating using this strategy the department needs the support of the town. Members are not paid for the time they spend training, maintaining equipment or providing non-emergency services. The time members commit to Amherst Fire Department is time that is competing against family and work obligations. None of these dedicated members provide this service for the money; they do it out of pride, spirit and tradition. If we want to continue with this inexpensive form of fire protection the least we can do, is to provide them with the best tools, equipment and facilities possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark R. Boynton

Fire Chief – Emergency Management Director

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department:
Public Safety Communications Center
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: Public Safety Communications Center

I. Introduction

The Amherst Public Safety Communications Center's mission is to provide the highest quality, cost effective emergency dispatch services for the public safety agencies protecting the residents of Amherst. In addition to emergency dispatching, the department serves the general public 24/7/365. This service provides for an open door to the police department around the clock. The days of finding the front door to the police station locked during the overnight hours came to an end six years ago when the town's people voted to support their own communications center. Over the years since the town has continued to realize the cost effective benefits of having its own communications center. And, we continue to receive positive feedback from the citizens of Amherst, our police, fire, emergency medical services, and public works departments.

The budgeted staffing levels include five full time dispatchers, including a supervisor, and four part time dispatchers. Oversight of the communications center is now shared by three department heads. Police Chief Peter Lyon manages personnel, day to day activities, and payroll; EMS Director Brian Gleason manages the budget; and Fire Chief Mark Boynton manages the technical communication equipment issues. On a daily basis the Communications Center is overseen by Communication Supervisor Shawn Brewer. He is responsible for dispatch protocol development and the management and development of existing and future staff. Our center is located in the police station main level and is comprised of two multi-station "*Computer Assisted Dispatch*" consoles, video monitoring equipment, state & county communications, and computerized recording equipment. As established last year, we continue to work in partnership with the Milford Area Communications Center and other area dispatch centers for purposes of emergency communications redundancy.

Because the Amherst Public Safety Communications Center serves our community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, our goal is to continue to balance the number of hours that are staffed with two dispatchers during peak call demand periods. Providing an efficient quality of service without compromising safety will always be paramount.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

In the past we have had the good fortune of being able to enhance our operation with grants providing equipment such as touch screen dispatch systems, and new radio base station equipment at no cost to the taxpayer. Now, six years later, it will be important that we continue to maintain the existing equipment, identify aging furnishings, office equipment, and computer equipment that will need modest upgrades and replacements. Currently, we are pursuing a grant that we will provide

a three year maintenance contract for the radios and consoles which were previously purchased with grant money. Lastly, we will continue to evaluate infrastructure upgrades such as radio voters, radio repeaters, microwave connections between sites, and communication towers.

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The communications department does not foresee any immediate need to add personnel or expand staffing in any way. Schedule adjustments have been made over the last year plus which have allowed us to best utilize the manpower and provide the employees with additional flexibility as needed. There are no projects or large scale purchases planned during the year which would have any fiscal impact. As mentioned, working within the existing budget, there may be some minor purchases and maintenance performed merely to keep on top of aging equipment. The Department will continue to pursue grants and other alternative funding projects to minimize the financial impact to the community, while at the same time continuously upgrading our equipment's capabilities.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

We have been very fortunate over the recent years to be able to upgrade radio equipment, console equipment and the like, all from the use of grant funds. As we continue to study our infrastructure needs, it is possible that expenditures for additional radio equipment, repeater equipment, and antenna towers could be on the horizon of the years to come. However, this has yet to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Lyon

Police Chief

APSCC Liaison

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department of Public Works
October 2010

Town of Amherst Departmental Review

Department: DPW

Introduction

1. Public Works Staffing covering *Highway, Town vehicle maintenance, Town Buildings, Baboosic Lake Septic, Parks, & Cemeteries* consisting of;
 - Director,
 - One and one half Office Staff,
 - Two Foremen,
 - One Mechanic,
 - Two Heavy Equipment Operators,
 - Five Light Equipment Operators,
 - Two Laborer/Drivers
 - *Technical Engineering Assistant* – Average 832 hrs /yr, (used more in the summer and less in winter months).
 - *Part-time summer help for ten weeks* – six to eight employees
 - *Stormwater interns, ten weeks* – two college students majoring in engineering.

Transfer Station –

- One full time,
- four part-time employees

I expect the wage and benefit study will adjust the inadequacies that currently exist.

2. A summary of this summer's projects
 - hot mix patch with rented "Hot Box" 141.09 tons and 585 gallons of emulsion (crew of 3 over a four month period)
 - 8,600 feet of Spring Road reconstructed (outside forces)
 - 4,200 feet of Amherst Street reconstructed (outside forces)
 - 7,625 feet of overlay on Spring, Juniper, and Broadway
 - Stop bars, parking lots, and crosswalk painting (240 man-hours)
 - Replaced 320 feet of culvert pipe (approx 280 man-hours)
 - Chip sealed 3.6 miles of road (120 man-hours in preparation)
 - Crack sealed 3.92 miles of roads
 - Roadside ditching (4,800 man-hours & three dump trucks)
 - Brush cutting (792 man-hours on Spring Road)
 - Town building repairs, not including Foreman (846 man-hours)
 - Some roadside mowing
 - Fertilizing and over-seeding commons and cemeteries
3. Issues in need of addressing
 - Red Listed Bridges

- Scheduled on the NHDOT bridge aid reimbursement for 2020/21, all three will need major work prior to those dates.
- Transfer Station,
 - We are reviewing various options to improve separation between vehicles and pedestrians this will involve some expense.
 - The scale house is a continued source of concern
 - Roofline – An illuminated truss roof over the walkway and bins sheltering employees and users from the elements.
 - Review of swap shop policies
- Highway Garage
 - Sander hangers – rotted steel and still on the verge of collapsing
 - Mechanic bay space – inadequate room/space to house hydraulic press, air conditioning service equipment, tire changing equipment. Ceiling height is inadequate for a vehicle lift.
 - A site plan review as a first step towards identifying storage space needs for both equipment and vehicles.

Department Goals for Improvement

1. Road repairs
 - Bad roads
 - The bond addresses the 22.9 miles of bad roads identified in 2008 but not sections identified since (perhaps another 4 miles).
 - Good roads
 - The town has 8+- miles of gravel roads
 - We need to properly maintain the 91 remaining miles of good roads to keep them from failing as well (this year, touched 8 this summer).
2. Vehicles/Equipment
 - There needs to be a funding plan that has wide spread support
 - Grader, 16 years old this budget cycle
 - Backhoe, 14 years old this budget cycle
 - Trucks (all used for winter plowing)
 - ❖ The Ford (97) purchased used last year is the oldest dump truck
 - ❖ The second oldest (International dump) truck will be 13 years old this budget cycle.
 - ❖ Our medium duty flat bed dump truck (96 Topkick GMC) will be 17 years old in this budget cycle.
 - ❖ It's an aging fleet with increasing hours of downtime, requesting support to move vehicle and equipment needs into the lease purchase line of the budget.
 - This year to date, 696 additional hours (second man) were spent on vehicle/equipment repairs/maintenance taking an employee away from road projects.
3. Transfer station
 - Hours of operations

- We average 3,200 cars per week or just under two cars per minute, consideration needs to be given to increasing our hours of operation.
- Scale house
 - We are continuously plagued scale problems and increasing repair costs.
 - Repair company recommends repairing/replacing major components
 - If replacement through lease/purchase is not supported, or we turn to a different strategy, a significant sum must be added to the repair line.

Fiscal Goals (Long-Term and Short-Term)

1. Transfer Station
 - Scale replacement (*short-term goal*)
 - Roof over deck (*long-term goal*)
2. Town building improvements
 - Central Fire Station
 - Second floor layout (*short-term goal*)
 - Improved insulation (*short-term goal*)
 - Upgrade air condenser (*short-term goal*)
 - Second Floor construction/reconstruction (*long-term goal*)
 - Police Station
 - Continue to monitor and improve building venting and insulation (*short-term goal*)
 - Monitor rusted steel support beam under Sally-Port (*long-term goal*)
 - Town Hall support beam
 - Support has been added to the beam and it is monitored, but it eventually needs replacing (*long term goal*)
 - Peabody Mill
 - Construction of a second well for drinking water. This is not a money issue; it is a logistics issue (*long term goal*).
 - South Fire Station
 - Paint building
 - Interior improvements (*short-term goal*)
 - Re-shingle roof (*short-term goal*)
 - Recreation Office
 - Seal area between the two basements (*short term*)
 - Repair picture window moisture (*short term*)
 - Town Hall
 - Trim and addition painting (*short-term goal*)
 - Repair/reconstruct window sills (*short-term goal*)
3. Additional employees,

- It is a tribute to the town that we have low employee turnover, however on the highway side we lose one position for forty-two weeks (42) to vacation scheduling
 - Between the summary of projects completed, the vacation schedule, and the projects we are not able to complete, I seek funding for two additional full-time employees. (*short term goal*)
 - Increase the hours of the half-time secretary position by four hours.
4. Road work
- Expand through additional funding roadside shoulder excavation/culvert cleaning program. (*short & long term*)
 - Expand the roadside brush cutting program. (*short & long term*)
5. Protecting DPW equipment investments ,
- Wash bay (*short term*)
 - 50'X60' Vehicle/equipment maintenance shop (*short term*)
 - Site plan review of Public Works facility (*short term*) after which plans should be made for.
 - New highway garage (*long term*)
6. Infrastructure
- Bridges, capital reserve actual construction, state scale 9 new, 0 closed (*short term/long term*)
 - **New Boston Road** bridge #109/090 condition rating at a 3 (Serious Condition – *loss of section, deterioration, spalling, or scour have seriously affecting primary structural components. Local failures are possible. Fatigue cracking in steel or shear cracks in concrete may be present*).
 - **Manchester Road** bridge #134/100 condition rating at a 3 (Serious Condition – *loss of section, deterioration, spalling, or scour have seriously affecting primary structural components. Local failures are possible. Fatigue cracking in steel or shear cracks in concrete may be present*).
 - **Horace Greeley Road** bridge #060/158 condition rating at a 3 (Serious Condition – *loss of section, deterioration, spalling, or scour have seriously affecting primary structural components. Local failures are possible. Fatigue cracking in steel or shear cracks in concrete may be present*).
 - Recommend significantly increasing the capital reserve and rewriting the capital reserve language that will also allow the Board of Selectmen expend from the Capital reserve for bridge repairs.
 - Culverts
 - Each year, we are faced with road sinkholes resulting from culvert failures (*short/long*)
 - Buried wires
 - Amherst Hills is an example, we are dealing with failing culverts and the repairs involve direct buried wires. (*both short and long term*)
 - Town parking lots/driveways
 - No money budgeted for any of this work such as the crack sealing at South Station charged to the Town Buildings repair line. (*long term*)

- Significant drainage work needs to be done at Police/EMS & Central Fire prior to any repaving.
- The main entrance to the DPW yard is patched and crumbling
- The Library parking is grossly inadequate

Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impacts

1. Trends

- Winter road deicing
 - Storage
 - Employee certification and usage record keeping
- The State of New Hampshire DES Streamwater Crossing rules will create a significant budget increase.

2. Needs

- Additional road maintenance funding to protect/maintain our good roads
- Vehicle and equipment upgrades
- Purchase our own asphalt hotbox (to date, we have spent \$19,200 on rental, a brand new one is around \$45,000)
- Equipment storage space
- Additional full-time help

3. Impacts

- Stormwater - the new permit has yet to come out and (it probably won't coincide with any budget cycle) all indications point to it being very expensive
- Red listed bridges/culverts
- Legislation regulating winter chemical usage
- Invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed and how they relate to this department.
 - Disposal of ditching material – if we transfer the invasive plant onto private property, we (the town) retains responsibility for removal.
 - Town owned property – labor intensive problem
- State Permitting - such as Streamwater Crossing, Wetlands, and Chemical Treatments within right-of-way and/or near bodies of water (special permit sp-180).
- Cemetery Fields/Forest View Cemetery – the approval of funding for layout is critical to the project.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Berry

Director of Department of Public Works

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: **Recreation**

Date: September 2010

**Town of Amherst
Departmental Review**

Department: Recreation

I. Introduction

Staffing:

Full Time

Director of Recreation:	Nancy McMillan
Park Foreman:	Keith Trott
Recreation Program Administrator:	Diana Jones

Part Time (Year Round)

Recreation Office Administrator:	Candy Shirey 25 hours/wk
PMEC Office Administrator:	Cari Lane 15 hours/wk
PMEC Educator & Hartshorn Instructor:	Paul Scopa 5-10 hours/wk
PMEC Educator & Hartshorn Instructor:	Aisha Mitchell 5-10 hours/wk

(*Note: PMEC Educators work 20hrs. per week-10 weeks during the summer)

Seasonal

Groundskeeper:	Stewart Long 8 mths (April-Nov)
2 Asst. Groundskeepers:	4 months (May-Oct.)
Aquatic Director:	3 months (June-Aug.)
Water Safety Instructors/Lifeguards: (7 WSI/Guards)	3 months (June-Aug.)
SummerScape Program Coordinator: (2 months (July-Aug.)	
Hartshorn Program Director: (2 months July-Aug.)	
Program Instructors: (Recreation & PMEC) (75-80 per year)	12 months

Budget:

The Fiscal Year 2011 Budget is comprised of three sources of funding: The Recreation General Fund, the Recreation Revolving Fund and the Peabody Mill Environmental Center Revolving Fund.

The Recreation General Fund source of revenue is from taxation and supports the following positions:

- Recreation Director
- Park Foreman
- Groundskeeper
- Recreation Office Administrator
- Recreation Program Administrator (20 hours)

The Recreation Revolving Fund source of revenue is from user fees and supports the following positions:

Recreation Program Administrator (20 hours plus benefits)
All Seasonal Staff (program instructors, supervisors, counselors,
groundskeeper, etc)

The PMEC Revolving Fund source of revenue is from taxation, grants, and user fees and supports the following positions:

PMEC Office Administrator
All Seasonal Staff (program instructors, supervisors, counselors,
school educators, environmental naturalists, etc.)

Current Budget Goals: Fiscal Year 2010-2011

Goal: To maintain or improve services within the approved budget allocations.

Objective: Critique, review and approve expenditures by the following:

- ❖ Establish necessity
- ❖ Determine if the expense can be deferred or eliminated
- ❖ Determine if it can be shared with another town department or another method (donations, grants, volunteer labor, etc.)
- ❖ Determine if it imposes any safety/liability concern if left undone or accomplished outside the scope of the Department.

II. Departmental Goals for Improvement

Some of the line item increases in the FY11 budget were in areas beyond our control (health benefits, utilities, and fuel, to name a few). Our 2.39% budget increase was accomplished by flat funding or reducing line items that may not necessarily have a direct impact on services (maintenance over time, telephone, field maintenance supplies). We will strive to improve our service delivery focusing on customer service by paying attention to details.

Department Standards

The Recreation Commission and Department have adopted the Department's mission as the standard they strive to meet each fiscal year: **To enhance the quality of life for all Amherst residents**

- ❖ Offer a diverse cultural community and special event activities for all family members
- ❖ Offer a full array of informational services of all leisure activities and organizations
- ❖ Provide environmental education and leisure opportunities
- ❖ Provide professional leisure department assistance to all community groups
- ❖ Provide quality leisure opportunities in a safe and healthy atmosphere
- ❖ Provide a well maintained park system and recreational facilities to be used in an optimal, fair and equitable manner

- ❖ Provide a comprehensive updated master plan for growth and development.

Department Goals

Goal: To create a community through people, parks (passive and active green space) and programs

Objective: To have a comprehensive plan to deliver recreational services as derived from the residents and elected boards and commissions of the Amherst community.

- ❖ Request Board of Selectmen to adopt the 2010 Recreation Program and Facilities Master Plan
- ❖ Respond to residents program needs/wants within budget allocations
- ❖ Respond to residents facilities needs/wants within budget allocations
- ❖ Work cooperatively with Amherst Departments, Commissions, Boards and Organizations to deliver service

Goal: Adopt the recommendation of the Cemetery Replacement Committee

Objective: To relocate the amenities at Cemetery Fields (playground and sports fields) to another parcel(s) and eliminate any interruption of service to residents and community groups that rely on them for their use.

Goal: Design a funding plan to secure a replacement parcel(s) and/or development costs associated with the relocation.

Objective: To reduce or minimize the tax impact on purchase and/or development.

- ❖ Obtain approval from the Board of Selectmen to apply for a Land, Water, Conservation (LWCF) matching grant (up to \$100,000)
- ❖ Obtain approval/support from the Board of Selectmen to submit a warrant article to expend funds from the Land Use Change Tax Fund to serve as a match to LWCF
- ❖ Seek contributions and/or in-kind services from local businesses and youth sports organizations to serve as a grant match
- ❖ Establish a capital field user fee for residents/non residents to serve as a grant match

Goal: Implement Volunteer/Employee Background Checks Policy

Objective: To take sound measure to protect our employees, volunteers, and those we serve from potential harm

- ❖ Obtain adoption of policy by the Board of Selectmen
- ❖ Implement November, 2010

Goal: Adopt the Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC) Use Policy

Objective: To provide user guidelines for public use of the building and grounds

- ❖ Obtain adoption of policy by the Board of Selectmen
- ❖ Implement upon approval

Goal: Increase PMEC school based programs on and off site

Objective: To market elementary, middle, high and home schools within a one hour driving distance

- ❖ Contact schools and invite to 10/21 Open House
- ❖ Ask for referrals from current home school groups
- ❖ Continue using web page, flyers, Face Book fan page as means of advertising services

Goal: Increase attendance at PMEC

Objective: Define PMEC as destination for environmental/science programs available to residents and neighboring communities

- ❖ Consolidate weekend hours for high concentration of programs/services
- ❖ Offer more Saturday programs for families, adults

Goal: Refurbish Davis Lane Tennis Courts

Objective: To improve the playing surface on the three existing courts

- ❖ Obtain approval from the Board of Selectmen to apply for Land, Water, Conservation matching grant (up to \$100,000)
- ❖ Apply for matching fund from the United States Tennis Association

Goal: Refurbish Lower Wilkins Athletic Field

Objective: To improve the playing surface on the athletic field

- ❖ Obtain approval from the Amherst District School Board
- ❖ Obtain approval from the Board of Selectmen to apply for a Land, Water, Conservation matching grant fund (up to \$100,000)
- ❖ Work with Amherst Patriots Football in contributing funds and/or in kind services to use as a grant match

Goal: Upgrade Restrooms and Repair Playground Retaining Wall at Baboosic Lake

Objective: To provide clean user- friendly restrooms and safe play-space areas.

- ❖ Obtain approval from the Board of Selectmen to apply for a Land, Water, Conservation matching grant fund (up to \$100,000)
- ❖ Work with Baboosic Lakers Swim Team parents in contributing funds and/or in kind services to use as a grant match

Goal: Upgrade Micro Soft Windows and Microsoft Office

Objective: To enable administrative staff current and more efficient software programs

- ❖ Replace (1997-2001) MS Word, MS Publisher, Windows
- ❖ Coordinate with Finance Department available updated software
- ❖ Purchase upgrades if necessary

III. Fiscal Goals (Long-Term & Short-Term)

The 2010-11 FY goals have a direct correlation to the bottom line of the budget. The 2.39% increase will have an insignificant impact on services. However, the increase does provide us with the means to maintain a level that the community has become accustomed to. I will continue to evaluate and take measures to improve services without a negative impact to the bottom line. User fees and partnerships with other Departments, School Districts, and Community Organizations will assist me with maximizing resources and delivering a more cost effect program.

The Recreation Commission continues to review the established policies and asses the impact they have on delivering services. As a result of revisions or implementation of new policies, it may require new training for our support staff and/or combining work efforts with other departments including both school districts.

IV. Future Trends, Future Needs, Future Impact

Recreational services although viewed sometimes as non essential services continue to be important to the Amherst residents. National attention remains focused on living a healthier life style and we are often asked to provide active and passive programs to help facilitate this challenge. Programs that help our citizens to reduce stress, combat childhood obesity, or provide public parks and athletic venues are only a few areas that we will be challenged with over time. Strategic planning for the onset of retired baby boomers will require age-friendly services. Boomers or mid-life adults do not consider themselves seniors or elderly and those are not terms with which they want to be identified. (Refer to hand out) Part of our challenge is to provide accessible, affordable programs and facilities that meet the needs of our residents with little or no tax impact. As a result of the national, state, and local economy we are challenged more now than ever; to maintain services with a reduction in tax dollars or user fees.

Planning and constant evaluation are two of the keys to successfully meeting this challenge. Involving the Amherst community in this process is vital to the desired end results. Responsible fiscal planning, forming partnerships, collaborations and researching funding and grants will help us reach our goals and reap the benefits that recreational services can bring to the Amherst community.

What's on the Horizon?—Budget planning for FY-2011-12

Items that will/may be addressed in budget requests:

Purchase/develop land, refurbish, tennis courts, bathrooms, athletic field
Matching funds for the Land, Water, Conservation Grant
Recreation storage shed replacement
Computer Upgrade for Recreation Office Administrator
Replacing carpet at Recreation Office-Work with Public Works
Replacing front window (broken seal) at Recreation Office-Work with Public Works
Increasing administrative hours to assist with Background Check policy-(-Recreation
Revolving)
Replacing part of Baboosic Lake docks

Respectfully Submitted:

Nancy McMillan
Recreation Director

Town of Amherst



Departmental Review

Department: Library
Date: September 2010

Introduction

Mission

The Amherst Town Library shall strive to provide all community residents with materials and services for their information, education and entertainment needs.

Vision

The Amherst Town Library is an essential, innovative community service and an accessible resource for people of all ages and backgrounds, enhancing our quality of life and affirming our sense of community.

Primary Service Goals

Current Topics & Titles: The library provides current topics & titles to help fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.

General Information: The library offers general information to help meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school and personal life.

Information Literacy: The library provides information literacy service to help address the need for skills related to finding, evaluating, and using information (in all formats) effectively.

Community Referral: The library addresses the need for information related to services provided by community agencies and organizations.

Staffing & Administration – The Amherst Town Library is governed by a 7-member elected Board of Trustees and operated by 7 full-time and 5 part-time “regular” staff as well as 7 high school Pages, who are all loosely organized into 3 Departments. Half of the positions are “professional” positions and the other half are “assistants”.

- This has been a year FILLED with personnel changes.
 - Last fall, our beloved Head of Children's Services left us to travel in France and then return to her native Iowa. We were pleased to find a replacement who seemed to have a similar skill set. Unfortunately, she failed to meet our expectations and the Board of Trustees voted to terminate her employment in June.
 - At the end of April, Martha Bosco, Technical Services Assistant retired. Martha had worked at the library for over 25 years

and was responsible for cataloging and processing most of the items in the library.

- The following month, Head of Circulation, Sally Bartlett, retired after 15 years with the library.
- And soon thereafter, Library Assistant, Vicki Durzy, also a "long timer" moved from a full to a part-time position.
- All of this change gave us a terrific opportunity to examine and shuffle responsibilities and reconfigure job descriptions. Amidst this, we were fortunate to promote Reference Librarian Sarah Leonardi to the Head of Circulation and Public Services position. It was a mutually beneficial change that we're all excited about as it will give Sarah more project management opportunity and fills a critical position with someone able to start a new job very high on the learning curve.
- We are fortunate to welcome 3 new staff members.
 - Sarah St. Martin joins us as our full-time Technical Services Librarian. Sarah recently completed her M.L.S. at Simmons and had been working at the Manchester City Library.
 - Carlos Pearman is our new full-time Reference Librarian. Most recently, Carlos has been an Instructional Librarian at Southern New Hampshire University.
 - Sarah Hydorn just joined us as our full-time Head of Children's Services. Sarah has worked for "more years than she cares to admit" at the Dover Public Library.
- Adding to the challenge of our personnel changes, I was out on maternity leave from December through February. My thanks to all who took on extra responsibilities to make that as smooth as possible.
- The Library Board of Trustees recognizes that the nature of our work and the rapid rate of technological change makes professional development critical for our staff. Some of the classes/ workshops/ conferences attended by our staff this year include: New England Library Association conference, READS conference, Pubic Library Association conference, New Hampshire Library Association conference, CHILIS conference, Reference Renaissance, Homework Survival Skills, Maintaining your PC class, eBooks, and a Downloadable Audiobooks workshop.

Collection – The Amherst Town Library has almost 78,000 items in our collection including best-selling books and magazines for all ages, the latest DVDs and CDs, downloads for your Nook, Sony eReader, MP3 player or iPod, audiobooks on cassette and CD, Nintendo ds and wii games,

reference material and newspapers for use in the library, a suite of electronic databases that can be accessed 24x7 from anywhere with Internet access, free and discount coupons to Boston area and local museums, an Amazon Kindle and Sony eReader, puzzles, cake pans, literacy games, and so much more.

- I am truly amazed to report that our overall circulation in FY10 was up almost 11%. That was the second year in a row with a double-digit increase and the 10th year in a row with an increase (a 68% increase in 10 years).
- This is truly an age of expanding material types. Every year it seems we offer an additional type of circulating material. This year, we began offering a collection of digital books that patrons can download to their compatible device (Sony Reader, Barnes and Noble Nook, etc.) The books are available through the same interface as our downloadable digital audiobooks, Overdrive, and I hope that they are similarly embraced. The downloadable audios are very popular and have a lower per-circulation cost than books on CD, and don't require any processing, repairs or shelf space!
- Patrons continue to take advantage of our reciprocal borrowing agreement and transit system with other GMILCS libraries. In FY10, our patrons borrowed almost 21,000 items from other GMILCS libraries using that system.

Services and Programming- The Amherst Town Library offers children's storyhour (in the library and offsite) and craft programs, concerts, lectures and demonstrations for adults, information and research assistance, meeting room space, notary service and a coin-operated copier.

- The library is proud to work towards two of the goals outlined in the 2010 Master Plan "encourage cultural activities" and "provide lifelong learning opportunities" with our successful services and programming.
- Last year was a banner year for adult programming, breaking all previous records. We offered 80 adult programs, an increase of almost 20% over FY09, and had 34% more attendees. The offerings were diverse, both scholarly and recreational, appealing to a variety of ages and interests. They ranged from "Building Career Connections" to "Winter Salads: cooking and tasting". Last year, funding for adult programs came from the town operating budget, trustee revenue, NH Humanities Council mini grants, and the Friends of the Library.
- Despite personnel changes, attendance at children's programming remained strong. An average of 668 kids attended a library

program each month. The culmination of the year was a terrific Summer Reading Program where 279 kids read a record-breaking 6014 hours, 128 adults read 742 books, and 184 middle schoolers participated. Approximately 250 people attended our end-of-Summer BBQ on the town common and got to see Miss Sue and Miss Emily "get slimed".

- The library's door count continues to hover just under 100,000 visits per year, over 8000 visits per month. Library meeting rooms were used over 800 times in the last fiscal year. The Board of Trustees recently approved a new Meeting Room Use policy setting recommended limits to individual groups using the meeting rooms. Meeting room use is a very real community need that is increasing annually and was articulated in the 2010 Master Plan.
- Last fall we began distributing an email newsletter twice a month which highlights just 3-5 items of interest. We've received rave reviews about the service, and statistics show very solid "open" and "click through" rates. We recently sent out our 20th issue to our 3046 subscribers.

Technology- The Amherst Town Library has a commitment to innovation and a history of responding enthusiastically to changing community needs, particularly with regard to technology as a means of maximizing access to information resources. We currently have 29 computers; 11 for staff use and 18 for public use. We provide the public with access to high speed Internet, scanning, and color laser printing. Additionally we are a wireless hotspot. We provide many services which can be accessed remotely 24x7, including a suite of reference and periodical databases, downloadable audiobooks and ebooks, online bookgroups and more.

- Last winter we installed a public PC management system that has improved the process of using public PCs for both the users and the staff. It enables us to analyze data about public PC use. It allows users to proceed directly to a computer without checking in at the front desk. It also includes a print management piece that eliminates wasted resources through accidental printing, and it allows users to put money on deposit for their printing.
- As you might expect, all aspects of our services related to technology continue to see increases. Last year, public PC use averaged 658 sessions per month, database use remained strong, and hits to the website continued to grow.
- Last year, we installed "Google Analytics" on our website and we are beginning to analyze use of our site by exploring things like visits, unique visitors, average visit length and page views, % of mobile users, and so forth.

Buildings and Grounds- The Amherst Town Library is a 10,755 square foot public building located in the Village. Built in 1892, renovated in 1911, 1971, and 1987, the library building reflects both modernization and preservation. The Amherst Garden Club created a fantastic exterior room for us when they gave our back garden an extreme makeover in 2006. The garden is now used by library patrons accessing WiFi or reading the paper and by groups needing meeting space.

- Last fall, the Department of Public Works replaced the walkway in front of the library. The poor condition of the walkway had been generating complaints from patrons for several years. The walkway was also a problem in the winter as it is shaded for most of the day so ice tends to buildup. During the project, the front door of the library was inaccessible. Public Works created an ADA accessible ramp for the side door and even a bookdrop so that the library could maintain regular operating hours during the project. Since the completion of the project, I have not heard of any slip/trip/fall accidents on the front walk.
- The carpet in the lower level of the library (4000 square feet) was replaced last month. The existing carpet which had been in place for 20 years was badly worn and stained, and was also fraying, creating a trip hazard. The project occurred with zero tax impact. \$6000 was granted for the project from the Bean Foundation, and the remaining \$10,808.65 was raised with 134 gifts from local organizations and individuals, including a very sizable gift from the Friends of the Amherst Town Library. The new carpet tiles can be individually replaced if stained or damaged.

Goals for Improvement

Collection

- Though the library offers myriad materials and services, our circulating collection is still our "bread and butter." We need to continually analyze how our collection is being used so that we are better able to anticipate and meet our user's demands. I would like to do a use-based collection analysis and shelf allocation study to ensure that we are growing our collection appropriately.
- The last renovation to the library took place almost 25 years ago, before the days of ubiquitous computing, smartphones, digital media and collaborative learning as it exists now. I believe that right now, instead of looking at another addition, we need to do a

space study to see if we can better use the structure that we have to meet our user's current needs. This year, we need to start the process of implementing a formal space study.

Technology

- The library's website contains information about our organization, materials and services. It is also the portal to our electronic resources. We designed the general structure of our website almost 5 years ago, which is a lifetime ago in the virtual world! So much has changed since then, in terms of what websites can do and how they are used. We have been collecting use data through Google Analytics and plan to use that information this year to revisit the general structure of our site and make changes to make it more effective for our users.

Marketing/ PR

- Despite the depth and breadth of our high quality services, there are still citizens who don't use the library at all. Our 6000 active cardholders are getting great services for their investment, but unfortunately, the other 5000 people in town are not getting their money's worth. We strive to have something for everyone and we are continually looking for new ways to get the word out to both our users and nonusers out about the range of our collection and services.

Programs/ Services

- We receive LOTS of praise about our high quality customer service, our exceptional programs for children and adults, and our professional reference service. Day-to-day, our first priority is to maintain the quality of our core services.

Facilities

- Thanks to Bruce Berry, Perry Day and the great team at the Department of Public Works; our building is in better shape than it has been in many years.
- As we look to the future, we need to be exploring alternatives to create more parking spaces for our customers. As use of the library increases, more people are driving to the library more often. We need to explore alternatives that will be safe and convenient, and also sensitive to the aesthetic and historic standards preferred by the community.
- The new carpet in the lower level of the library looks terrific. The one drawback, is that it stands in sharp contrast to the deplorable condition of the carpeting on the main floor. We need to be

actively investigating options for re- carpeting the main floor of the library in a way that is appropriate for our high use, but also has a reasonable cost for our taxpayers.

Fiscal Goals

At the library, we are continually trying to maximize our patrons' return on investment by offering efficient and effective library service without excess cost. Several times in the past five years, we have tweaked scheduling and division of responsibilities to enable us to increase service without increasing staff, and we have used outside funding (Friends of the Library, Junior Women's Club, Lions Club, NH Humanities Council, National Endowment for the Arts, etc.), when it's cost effective to do so, for some programming and special projects. We collect LOTS of data and analyze statistics regularly in an effort to make educated choices about how we spend our time and resources. We stay abreast of trends in the field and try to anticipate our users evolving needs. Regardless of our careful spending, some incremental cost increases are unavoidable.

- Wages and Benefits – Personnel cost make up a majority of our operating budget. We pride ourselves on the quality of our service, and that is only as good as our staff. To that end, we strive to attract and retain exemplary librarians and library assistants. Wages need to increase annually to remain competitive.
- Supplies – As we introduce and circulate additional formats of library materials, we find that our processing costs increase. Things like library-quality DVD cases and audiobook cases, and the related accoutrements, are now materials that we regularly stock and use, whereas twenty years ago, most processing just included book covering, stickering, and spine labeling. Fortunately, cost increases in this area are slightly offset with an increase in digital (downloadable) materials that don't require any processing at all.
- Programs – Program attendance for all ages has grown steadily over the past few years, suggesting a clearly identified community demand. While we have been successfully juggling tasks and streamlining procedures to enable existing staff to coordinate additional programs, increased performer fees and materials costs are unavoidable.
- Library Materials – We continually have more registered borrowers checking out more materials. Also, publishing costs continue to rise. This invariably means that we will need to increase our spending on books, audios, CDs, DVDs, magazines, etc. accordingly.
- Automated Library System – We are one of eleven members of GMILCS, Inc., a non-profit consortium of public and academic

libraries in New Hampshire, sharing an integrated system, resources and experience. The GMILCS, Inc. consortium serves the libraries of Amherst, Bedford, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Manchester, Merrimack, Milford, Salem, Southern New Hampshire University, New England College and the New Hampshire Institute of Art. SNHU will be leaving the consortium at the end of this year and as a result, our dues will go up an estimated 10% in FY12 while the organization figures out how best to manage this loss.

- Because of the tremendous use that our library receives day after day, carpet and furnishings are showing wear. We need to be planning towards replacing carpet and upholstery.

Future Trends

Libraries are not static buildings filled with musty books and dowdy librarians. Increasingly, they are vibrant community centers of innovation. Beyond being storehouses of information, they are dynamic collections where patrons of all types can meet their informational and educational needs, connect with their community, and find recreation and entertainment in an engaging way. To maintain our relevance and viability in our community, we need to

- Embrace new technology to make our services more available (think instant gratification and 24/7) and more customizable or personalized. In today's busy society, people don't want to wait and they don't want choices, they want what they want.
- Preserve and make available the history of our community. In an age where information is proliferating, yet unstable, we need to secure our unique heritage. With an increasing amount of time spent in virtual spaces, people crave the human element of their local history.
- Use our physical space in new and creative ways. Whether it's reorganizing existing collections to make room for new formats, or carving out more public meeting space, or something entirely different, we need to be quick to adapt our physical environment to changing needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Lapointe, Library Director
9/23/10